

# FEATURING BEST PRACTICES OF STATE AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

## Classify Positions Public Health Occupations Enhanced Banding Environment (PHOEBE)

Virginia Department of Health  
implemented this best practice  
in October 1999

*Qualifying under the  
Best Practices catalogue*

3 Provide Capabilities  
32 Support resources  
322 Enhance/upgrade organizational capabilities

### Best Practice Summary (how it works, how you measure it)

The Department of Health (VDH) has designed **PHOEBE**, a unique position classification and career mobility plan employing an "occupational banding" concept. VDH support positions, previously classified within a wide variety of occupational classes, will now be classified with a single, overarching **Public Health Associate** (PHA) class. The plan offers management unprecedented flexibility in the design of positions to meet changing business needs and removes artificial barriers to career mobility, giving employees opportunities to move into new occupational areas. The new system is enhanced by a computer-assisted classification method that assesses PHA grades, consistent with Department of Personnel and Training class

specifications. Although initially being implemented for support positions, the occupational banding and computer-assisted classification concepts can be applied to other occupational groupings.

## **Impact on the Process Organizational Performance (OUTCOMES)**

The elimination of artificial occupational barriers significantly improves management's flexibility to assign tasks in response to changes in business conditions, resulting in improved service to customers at reduced cost. Employees can experience greater job satisfaction and expanded career options. The standardization of duties, tasks and expectations across the agency can be expected to reduce administrative costs and improve equity. The computer-assisted grade assessment feature will allow health districts and program offices to classify their PHA positions locally and will provide powerful capabilities for modeling and "what if" analyses for planning and organizational design.

## **Best Practice Qualification**

***PHOEBE*** is a unique concept, never before attempted within the Commonwealth. The plan offers the potential for radical improvements in agency management of positions and employee career planning. The fundamental elements of the system were extensively tested at a VDH health district, before submission to the Department of Personnel and Training, which approved the class specification and authorized a pilot implementation.

## **For Additional Information**

Virginia Department of Health  
P. O. Box 2448, Room 220  
Richmond, VA 23803

George Pilarinos  
(804) 371-4225  
[gpilarinos@vdh.state.va.us](mailto:gpilarinos@vdh.state.va.us)

Paula Scott Dehetre  
Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Administration  
(804) 786-1983  
[pdehetre@vdh.state.va.us](mailto:pdehetre@vdh.state.va.us)